



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

## COMMITTEE REPORT

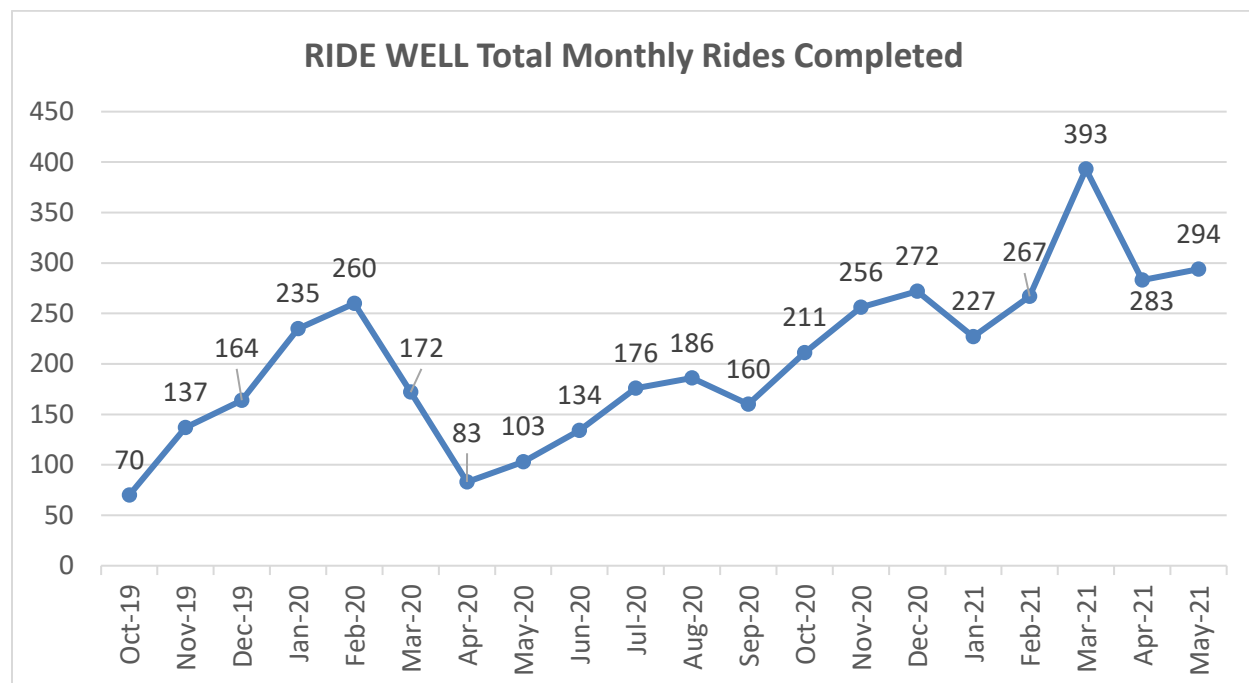
**To:** Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee  
**From:** Crystal Ellis, Director of Economic Development  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021  
**Subject:** Economic Development – June Report

### RIDE WELL

Ridership continues to be above average with 294 rides completed during the month of May, the second-highest monthly total since the service was launched in October 2019. We estimated that May would yield similar numbers to April 2021 given the extended Province-wide stay-at-home-order and hope to see an increase in ridership as businesses begin a gradual reopening in June.

There were 45 unique users in May, which is roughly similar to the amount observed in April (44) and March (46). This shows that the overall number of riders has remained steady, but the frequency of use was impacted by the lockdown measures. For example, average rides per user in March 2021 was 8.5 compared to 6.4 in April 2021, and 6.5 in May 2021.

RIDE WELL is launching a Registered User Survey this month. The survey will be delivered electronically to all 995 registered users that have signed up since the service launched in October 2019. The goal of this survey is to gather feedback about the service from all registered users, including those that have never taken a ride. This feedback will help us better understand who the RIDE WELL audience is, what barriers are currently preventing them from using the service, and what features of the service are most enjoyed by riders. The data collected from this survey will be critical as RIDE WELL approaches the fifth and final year of its pilot in 2022. Reviewing the data will allow us to explore improvements and changes required for the service.



## Community Improvement Programme (CIP)

The County received four CIP applications in May 2021. Each project was successful through the Invest MORE funding stream for a total of \$30,000. Please see the following details of each new application:

- 209 Main Street West, Palmerston approved for \$10,000 for structural improvements including a new roof, electrical, plumbing, heating, and structural repairs to prepare two upper floor apartments. There will also be façade improvements to the property that include brickwork, new siding, and new doors and windows. The 2021 activities will not include any improvements to the vacant commercial space, as the applicant is planning to renovate that space in 2022.
- 233 Main Street West, Palmerston approved for \$10,000 for structural improvements including a new roof, electrical, plumbing, heating, and structural repairs required to prepare the upper floor apartment for rent. There will also be façade improvements that include brickwork, new siding, and new doors and windows. The commercial space below the apartment is currently occupied by Fallis Fallis and McMillan Law Office.
- 123 Main Street, Erin approved for \$5,000 for façade improvements, including new historical signage in front of the Rexall store and improvements to the exterior paint and awnings.
- 143 Dennis Street, Rockwood approved for \$5,000 to renovate a vacant commercial space in downtown Rockwood. Key improvements include replacing the roof membrane and wet insulation that currently restrict the space from being rented.

One CIP project was completed in May, the Fergus Marketplace exterior renovation can be seen in the before and after images below.



Exterior before



Exterior after

## Business Recovery Grants

The Business Recovery Grants, administered by the two Community Futures organizations in Wellington County have had great uptake. There is still funding available through the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation but funds with the Wellington Waterloo Community Futures has been fully subscribed, pending full receipt of requirement documents for formal approval and payment. In total 145 grants have been approved and of those 62 have been disbursed. The disbursement of funds is shown for each organization below.

### Saugeen Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)

Total funding allocation of \$43,000. Supporting the Town of Minto and Township of Wellington North.

<b>SEDC Grants</b>	<b>Number of Grants Approved</b>	<b>Total Approved Funding</b>	<b>Total Disbursed Funding</b>	<b>Total Number of Disbursed Grants</b>
Business Safety Supply and PPE Grant	16	\$10,511	\$8,465	13
Business Services Support Grant	13	\$10,158	\$5,200	7
Physical Adaptation and Technology Grant	13	\$14,310	\$9,020	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>\$34,979</b>	<b>\$22,685</b>	<b>29</b>

### Waterloo Wellington Community Futures (WWCF)

Total funding allocation of \$107,000. Supporting the Township of Centre Wellington, Town of Erin, Township of Guelph Eramosa, Township of Mapleton, and Township of Puslinch.

<b>WWCF Grants</b>	<b>Number of Grants Approved</b>	<b>Total Approved Funding</b>	<b>Total Disbursed Funding</b>	<b>Total Number of Disbursed Grants</b>
Business Safety Supply and PPE Grant	23	\$15,351	\$8,467	10
Business Services Support Grant	33	\$27,936	\$6,454	8
Physical Adaptation and Technology Grant	47	\$54,829	\$19,876	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>\$98,116</b>	<b>\$34,797</b>	<b>33</b>

## Directional Tourism Signage

County tourism signage installation is underway with all the blades, tabs, and new panels manufactured and delivered to the Roads department. This year, there will be 21 new signs representing nine different businesses installed around the County in total. Intake for the next round of signage will be promoted in the fall, deadline to apply for 2022 is November 30, 2021.

## Taste Real

Taste Real continues to support local food initiatives, finding creative ways to promote local food during these challenging times. Our brand new Farmers' Market Trails passport is set to be distributed in mid-June, as markets are set to open. The brochure contains information about all eight local markets and encourages residents to visit several local markets this summer. Market-goers can collect stickers at each market and enter a contest to win one of seven market prize packs valued at \$70 each. The brochure also promotes the #tasterealmarkets photo contest and market box series taking place this summer. Passports will be available at participating markets, municipalities and tourism outlets.

Also brand new, a 2021 **Picnic Programme** is being developed with input from member municipalities. Staff are creating a county-wide picnic programme to be launched this summer to further support local restaurants and to encourage residents and visitors to safely explore outdoor destinations. The programme will feature an online picnic map of suitable parks and outdoor spaces and include a curated list of restaurants offering picnic menus. The initiative will also pair with the Wellington County Takeout Map with the new Picnic Location Map, allowing for a variety of food choices and to support all food establishments across the County.

The **Local Food Map** activity kit initiative has proven to be popular amongst residents. The Economic Development office received more than 75 requests within the first two weeks of the launch. The kit includes a copy of the local food map, a package of locally grown carrot seeds, and a local food map treasure hunt activity that can be completed from home. Map distribution resumed in June and it is the intention to have all Taste Real businesses and tourism outlets fully stocked by the end of the month.

## Talent Attraction

Staff have finalized the Welcoming and Inclusion Surveys which we intend on releasing to businesses and newcomers late June. Bronte Smith, a summer and graduate student from Lakehead University, joined the team on May 25. Collaboration with Dr. Kimberly of the Lang School of Business at the University of Guelph is ongoing with efforts to gain access to Qualtrics survey software platform.

To ensure proper roll out of the survey, a directory of key community support organizations, businesses, government officials, municipal employees and community leaders has been established. The survey will be released this month and close on July 31, 2021.



## Smart Cities – Our Food Future

As the Our Food Future project creates more connections and opportunities for businesses, staff are also working to simplify the path and make it easier for producers and businesses to connect with resources. To that end, the following two new tools have launched this spring.

- **Circular Economy iHub (CE iHub) Digital Passport.** Guelph-Wellington businesses now have an easy way to join the Circular Economy. Creating a passport profile online means a business will be offered a one-on-one guidance by the CE iHub. The progress through various services and programmes within the Our Food Future ecosystem can be tracked and recorded through the use of passport stamps. The CE iHub team helps businesses develop circular business models, which include a focus on reducing emissions and increasing sustainability, and connect with funding or mentorship. The Digital Passport is available at [www.foodfuture.ca/passport](http://www.foodfuture.ca/passport).
- **ReSource Exchange Marketplace.** A circular economy is one which designs waste out of the system. This can be achieved by using a waste product as an input, or by ensuring your waste product can be used by someone else. To enable this, the Our Food Future project is launching the ReSource Exchange Marketplace, an online platform for sourcing or offering surplus materials. The listings allow members to connect with one another and create new circular collaborations by keeping waste in the value chain. The ReSource Exchange Marketplace is available at <https://resourceexchange.ca>

Both of the above mentioned platforms are currently in the soft-launch phase and will continue to add content and connections throughout the summer.

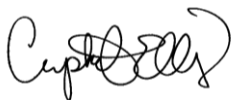
### Other Activities

- 132 enquires received in the last month including RIDE WELL, internet, housing, business grants and 100 of those enquires related to the Local Food Map promotion.
- Business e-newsletter sent May 25 and Taste Real e-Newsletters sent May 6.
- Economic Development is supporting Treasury with the Standards and Poors Credit Review in July.
- Attainable Housing Taskforce Group met on June 3.
- Food Hub project is underway.
- Aaron participated in the Canada Immigration Virtual Summit 2021 hosted by the Conference Board of Canada on May 25 – 27.

### Recommendation:

That the Economic Development Committee approve the Economic Development June Report.

Respectfully submitted,



Crystal Ellis  
Director of Economic Development